

American tragedy to deport this brave and talented healthcare professional in the midst of a pandemic. We must ensure that she and hundreds of thousands of our essential workforce are not forced to stop contributing when the need for their service has never been greater, and we must give them the chance they deserve to become American citizens.

I cannot express my gratitude enough for President Biden, in the first hours that he was in office, recognizing the needs of the DACA recipients and the Dreamers. I want to work with him and work with both parties across the aisle to make this dream come true for so many who deserve it. They have waited long enough.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

NOMINATION OF AVRIL HAINES

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, for the information of other Senators who want to know if we have a vote tonight specifically on the nomination of Avril Haines to be Director of National Intelligence, I was the last person to object to holding that vote. I no longer object.

I wanted to have a question for the record answered. Miss Haines, thankfully, responded to my question yesterday. I want to thank Senator RUBIO and Senator WARNER for helping us get that answer.

Specifically, in her open session yesterday, she gave an answer to Senator WYDEN that suggested the intelligence community might reopen investigations into detention interrogation programs from 2001 to 2006. She clarified, in the private setting that we had, that she had no intention to open up those investigations and expose operations officers inside the CIA to criminal prosecution or adverse employment action or even holding it against them in potential future promotions or placements.

She has confirmed that in the written record. I am glad to see that we are not going to reopen that period.

I want to thank Ms. Haines for providing the answer.

Most importantly, I want to thank our brave operations and paramilitary operations officers in the CIA for what they do, always, to keep this country safe. I am ready to vote on this nomination. I believe the rest of the Senate is as well.

I yield back the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, at noon today, Joe Biden was sworn in as our

new President. I never served with President Biden when he was a Senator, but I can tell you, from direct and firsthand experience, that he is a man of tremendous empathy. I have witnessed it. And so I pray that God will bless him with strength, with health, and with wisdom, because I don't need to tell anyone that we, in our Nation, are living in troubled times.

President Trump was elected and then, in this last cycle, received 75 million votes, in part because he spoke to and was brutally honest about some of the grievances and the fears that are now dividing our country. It is important to understand that he didn't create them, and that is why his exit alone is not going to make America normal again.

The troubles we face and the things that now divide us really aren't so much about politics or about ideology. If you look into them, they are really more about the things that are at the core of our identity as a nation and as a people.

Our people want a country where everybody has the opportunity to find a good job, to get married, to live in a safe neighborhood, to not go into debt because they have a baby, to send their kids to a good school, and one day to retire with dignity and security. But we have millions of Americans who increasingly feel that that kind of life and those kinds of things are out of reach for them, and they are really frustrated that neither those in government or either political party seem to be doing much about them.

The people need a sense of belonging and purpose, but the places that we used to get that from—our families, the community groups we joined, the synagogues, the churches—many of them are in collapse. So now you have millions of people who feel isolated or alienated and some who are turning to hyperpartisan politics and even online conspiracy cults to fill the void that those institutions once filled.

The overwhelming majority of Americans reject racism and bigotry and discrimination. But they also reject identity politics, which constantly seems to want to divide us against and apart from each other on the basis of race and ethnicity and gender.

We are a nation that is proud of our heritage as a nation of immigrants, but millions of Americans—I would say the majority—also believe we are a nation that has to have immigration laws. They need to be followed, and they need to be enforced.

Most Americans accept that our country, our society is changing, and they understand that there are people with different views and different ways of life. What they do resent is efforts to demonize and to persecute those who hold the traditional values that are inherited from our Judeo-Christian heritage.

Most Americans believe decency and morality require that everyone is entitled to dignity and to respect. But

there are also many growing increasingly tired of walking on eggshells of political correctness and forced to undergo sensitivity training because everyone seems to be so easily offended these days by everything.

People understand that we have to do something. It is a problem. We have to do something about people who use social media to spread dangerous lies, to instigate violence. But I think they also have a right to be very troubled that five CEOs of technology companies—five people in five companies, elected by no one, accountable to no one—have the power, if they so choose, to wipe out, to silence anyone—even a President.

And I would tell you that, almost without exception, they were horrified—horrified—about what happened here 2 weeks ago today. They want those people in jail. But they also wonder: Where was that outrage when this summer, in multiple cities, across a number of months, there were people setting fire to police cars and breaking into police stations and attacking courthouses and looting private property?

I will tell you that they see firsthand every day the extraordinary damage being done by this terrible pandemic and the damage being done by our bitter divisions, which, frankly, I think most Americans will never understand why the first thing we are going to do here, potentially, is an impeachment trial of a President who isn't even in office anymore.

What happened today was incredibly important. The pageantry, the rituals behind it—it matters. And for the 59th time in our history, we peacefully transferred power from one leader to the next. I think the fact that that happened on the very steps of this Capitol, where just 2 weeks ago on this day we saw an unimaginable attack on democracy, that should serve as a reminder to all of us in this country and a powerful message to the world that our Republic remains resilient.

But now the hard work of self-government begins, and these anxieties I have just described—the tens of millions of Americans—need to be acknowledged, and they need to be addressed. If they are ignored, if they are allowed to fester, what it will do is it will leave us not just a nation that is paralyzed and can't take action on important issues; we are going to be left a nation that remains vulnerable to those who are willing to exploit and stir the most destructive impulses.

Today, President Biden struck important tones of national unity, and I believe they were sincere. But pursuing a radical agenda in a country so divided does not serve the cause of unity. It will only serve cynicism that destroys trust.

By the same token, continuing to fan the flames of grievances or, in the alternative, pursuing vengeance disguised as accountability will not serve the cause of unity either. That is nothing but the politics of resentment and